



Trends in Vermont Violent Deaths

July 2026

The Vermont Department of Health is part of the [National Violent Death Reporting System](#), a state-based tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to analyze violent deaths cases. The CDC defines a violent death as one that “results from the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or community”¹. Vermont’s Violent Death Reporting System (VTVDRS) collects information on violent deaths that occur in Vermont from a variety of data sources. These sources include death certificates, medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, electronic medical records, emergency medical services incident records, and prescription drug monitoring data. In this report, we examine violent deaths using 2015 through 2023 data from VTVDRS. If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact AHS.VDHIInjuryData@vermont.gov.

Key Points

- **Most (78%) violent deaths in Vermont are suicides.**
- **Firearms are the top method of death of all violent deaths.**
- **Men are more likely to be decedents of violent deaths compared to women.**
- **Violent death rates are higher in Caledonia and Windham counties and lower in Chittenden and Franklin Counties compared to Vermont overall.**

An Overview of Violent Deaths in Vermont

Categories of Violent Deaths in Vermont

VTVDRS uses law enforcement, medical examiner, and death certificate data to determine manner of death, or how someone died. NVDRS classifies violent deaths into five categories: suicide, homicide, unintentional firearm, legal intervention, and undetermined intent (could not be determined)². Of all violent deaths in Vermont from 2015-2023, nearly four in five (78%) people died by suicide, and one in ten (10%) died by homicide.

Most violent deaths in Vermont from 2015-2023 are suicides.

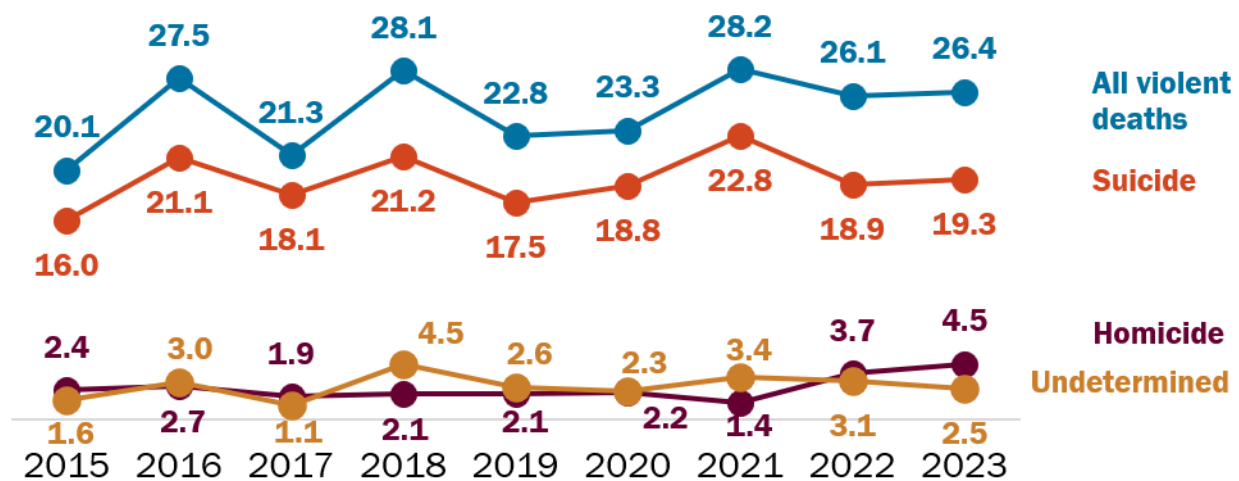
Manner of Death	Number	Percent
Suicide or intentional self-harm	1,102	78%
Homicide	146	10%
Unintentional firearm	6	0%
Legal intervention	14	1%
Undetermined intent	153	11%
Total	1,421	100%

Trends in Violent Deaths over Time

The rate of violent deaths (per 100,000 population) significantly increased between 2015 and 2023. None of the individual violent death categories (suicide, homicide, or undetermined intent) showed significant changes between 2015 and 2023. Note that the legal intervention and unintentional firearm categories are not reported due to the small number of deaths. See the appendix for the deaths associated with these rates.

Violent deaths have significantly increased between 2015 and 2023.

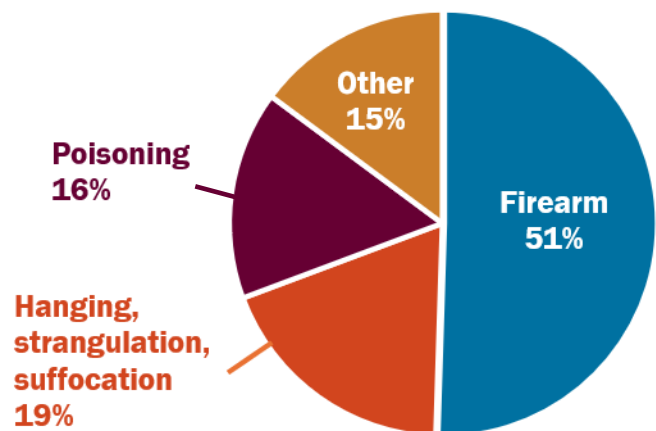
Rate per 100,000 population.



Method of Death

Firearm injury (51%, deaths = 718) is the most common cause of death from 2015-2023 of all violent deaths, followed by hanging, strangulation, and suffocation (19%, deaths = 265); poisoning (16%, deaths = 223); and other (15%, deaths = 215). The “other” category includes methods such as sharp or blunt instruments, physical methods such as punches, motor vehicles (including buses and motorcycles), other transport vehicles, intentional neglect, drowning, fire/burns, non-powder guns, shaking, unknown causes, or others that do not fit into the previous categories. Each of these categories was 3% or less of the total number of deaths. Note that percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Over half (51%) of all violent deaths from 2015 to 2023 involved a firearm.



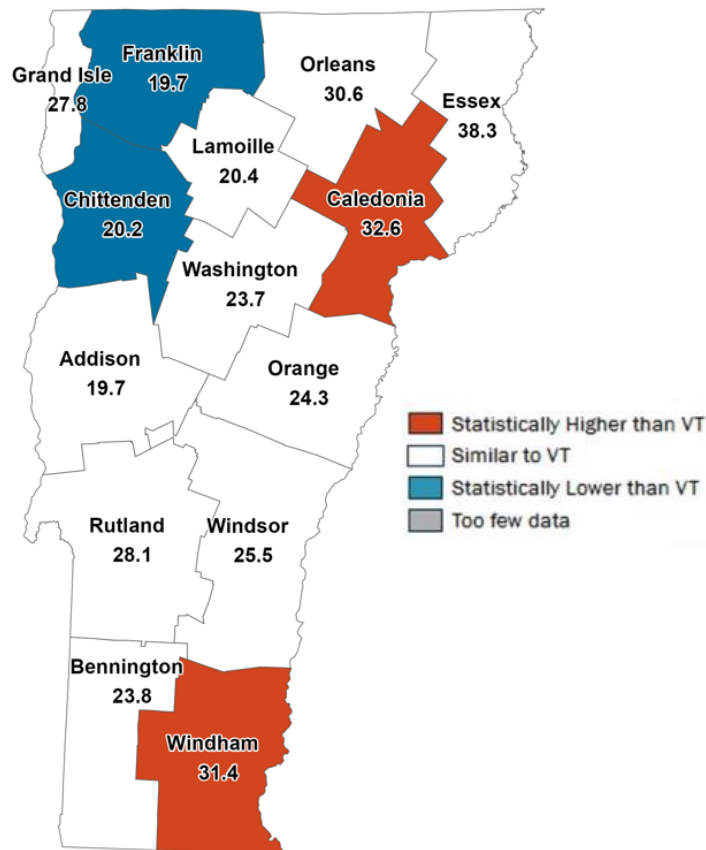
Location of Violent Deaths

County of Injury

The rate of violent deaths per 100,000 population from 2015 to 2023 are statistically higher in Caledonia (32.6) and Windham Counties (31.4) compared to Vermont overall (24.7). The rate of violent deaths per 100,000 population from 2015 to 2023 are statistically lower in Franklin (19.7) and Chittenden (20.2) Counties compared to Vermont overall (24.7). All other counties are statistically similar to the state rate.

Caledonia and Windham Counties have a higher rate and Chittenden and Franklin Counties have a lower rate of violent deaths compared to Vermont.

Rate per 100,000 population from 2015 to 2023



Place of Injury

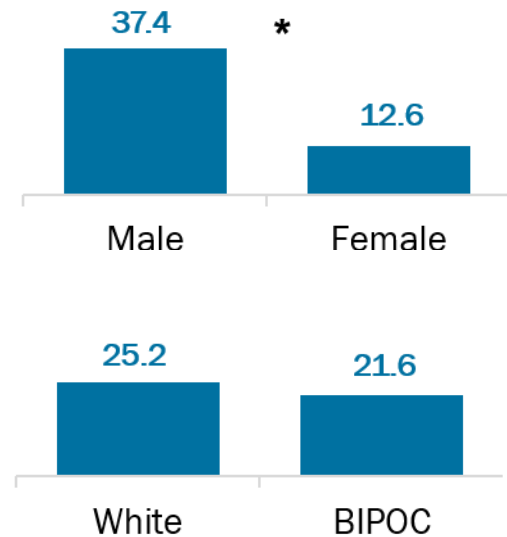
Most violent deaths from 2015 to 2023 in Vermont occurred at a house or apartment (63%, deaths = 896). The next most common place of injury is in a natural area such as woods, rivers, or fields (9%, deaths = 126). The third most common place of injury is in motor vehicles, excluding school bus or public transportation (6%, deaths = 90).

Demographics of Violent Deaths

Biological Sex

Men are significantly more likely to be decedents of violent deaths compared to women. The rate of death for males is nearly three times that of females in Vermont from 2015 to 2023. This difference may be partially due to a higher suicide rate among males³, as most violent deaths in Vermont are suicides.

The violent death rate of for males is nearly three times that of females*. Violent death rates between white and BIPOC populations are similar.



*indicates statistical significance.

Race and Ethnicity

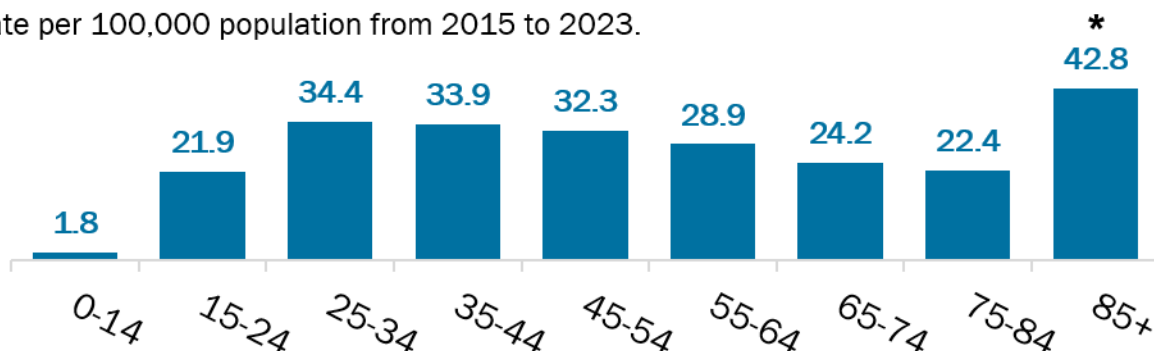
Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) includes Black or African American; Native American, Indigenous, or First Nation; Pacific Islander; Asian; two or more races; and Hispanic. Rates of violent death between white, non-Hispanic and BIPOC populations are statistically similar from 2015 to 2023 in Vermont.

Age

The rate of death in the 85+ age group was significantly higher than all age groups except ages 25-54. Although the rate of violent death steadily decreases after 25-34 years old, there is a significant increase in rate of death at 85+ years old. Older Vermonters are at higher risk of suicide³, which may explain this increase. The average age at death was 47.6 years old (median = 48 years old) for all violent deaths from 2015 to 2023 in Vermont.

The violent death rate is highest among those 85 years of age and older.

Rate per 100,000 population from 2015 to 2023.



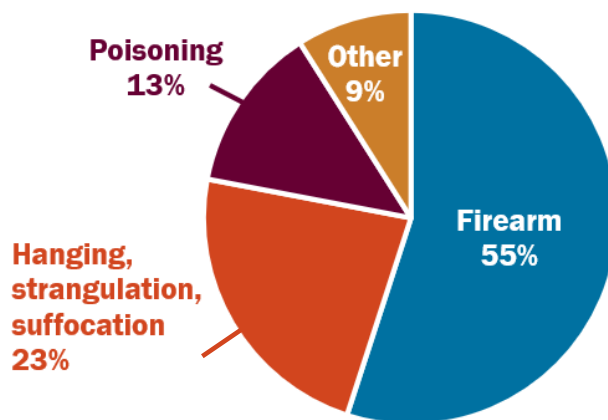
Subcategories of Violent Deaths

Legal intervention and unintentional firearm groups are not shown due to small numbers.

Suicide

- Firearm (55%, deaths = 604) is the most common method of death from 2015-2023 of all suicides, followed by hanging, strangulation, and suffocation (23%, deaths = 255), poisoning (13%, deaths = 146), and other (9%, deaths = 97).

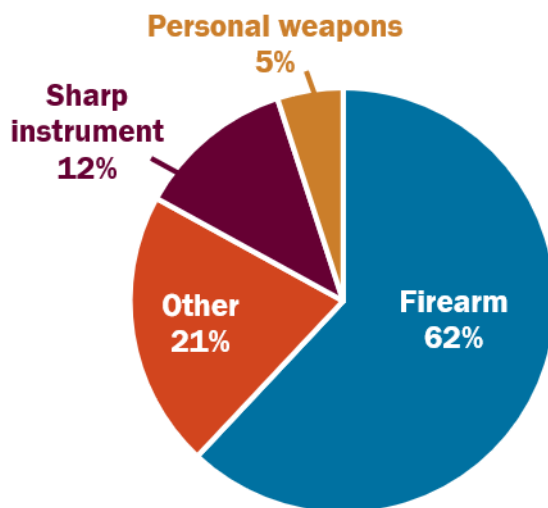
Firearms are the most common method of death for suicides.



Homicide

- Firearm (62%, deaths = 91) is the most common method of death from 2015-2023 in all homicides. This is followed by other (21%, deaths = 30), sharp instruments (12%, deaths = 17), and physical methods such as punches (5%, deaths = 8).

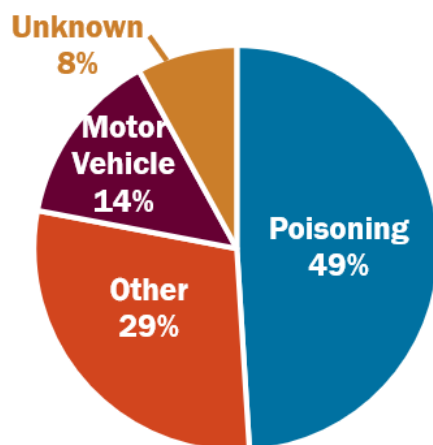
Firearms are the most common method of death for homicides.



Undetermined Intent

- Poisoning (49%, deaths = 75) is the most common method of death from 2015-2023 of all undetermined intent deaths, followed by other (29%, deaths = 45); motor vehicle, including buses and motorcycles (14%, deaths = 21); and unknown (8%, deaths = 12).

Poisoning is the most common method of death for undetermined deaths.

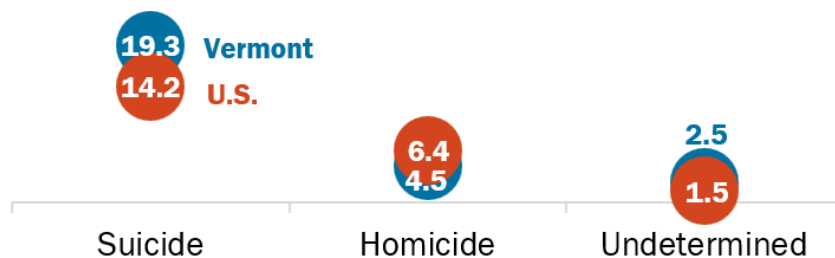


Vermont to US comparisons

- Vermont's suicide rate is consistently higher than the national rate. For example, in 2023, the suicide rate in Vermont was 19.3 suicides per 100,000 people, while the U.S. rate was 14.2 suicides per 100,000 people⁴.
- Vermont consistently has a lower rate of homicide compared to the national average. In 2023, the homicide rate in Vermont was 4.5 homicides per 100,000 people compared to the U.S. rate of 6.4 homicides per 100,000 people⁴.
- Vermont consistently has a similar rate of undetermined deaths (deaths of undetermined intent that may have been due to violence) compared to the national average. In 2023, the undetermined rate in Vermont was 2.5 undetermined deaths per 100,000 people. The U.S. rate was 1.5 undetermined deaths per 100,000 people.⁴

The suicide rate in Vermont is higher than that of the U.S. in 2023.

Rate per 100,000 population



Data Notes

- The violent death rates that are presented here may vary slightly from death rates published by Vital Records. While both Vital Records and VTVDRS use death certificate data in determining manner of death, VTVDRS includes additional data sources such as law enforcement and medical examiner reports. Differences may be due to these additional data sources. Learn more about [Vital Records](#) at the State of Vermont.
- The Health Department recognizes that many social, economic and environmental inequities made worse by structural oppression, marginalization and racism influence the data we collect and report. We continuously work to better collect and share data that reflect the lived experiences of all Vermonters. If you have questions or concerns, please check our [Data Encyclopedia](#) for more information, including who to contact to find out more.
- Some data in this brief (e.g., trend by year) contain small numbers. Rates calculated with small numbers can be unstable and should be interpreted with caution.
- All analyses were run in R (version 4.5.1).

Resources

- If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, there is help 24/7: Call, text or chat the [988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#). For more information about getting support, helping others who may be at risk of suicide, and getting more involved in suicide prevention in Vermont, go to [FacingSuicideVT.com](#).
- For comprehensive data reporting on suicide prevention in Vermont, see results from our [Suicide Data Linkage Project](#) and [other suicide data products](#).
- Explore [violence prevention resources](#) and work being done in Vermont around this issue.

References

1. [National Violent Death Reporting System Web Coding Manual Version 6.1](#)
2. To learn more about the violent death categories, see <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/about/nvdrs-data/>
3. [Vermont's 2025 Annual Suicide Data Report](#)
4. US rates for violent deaths were sourced from the NVDRS [Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System](#) produced by the Data Analytics Branch, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC.

Appendix

Number of violent deaths by year

Year	Deaths
All violent deaths	
2015	126
2016	172
2017	133
2018	176
2019	142
2020	150
2021	182
2022	169
2023	171
Suicide	
2015	100
2016	132
2017	113
2018	133
2019	109
2020	121
2021	147
2022	122
2023	125
Homicide	
2015	15
2016	17
2017	12
2018	13
2019	13
2020	14
2021	9
2022	24
2023	29

Year	Deaths
<i>Undetermined Intent</i>	
2015	10
2016	19
2017	7
2018	28
2019	16
2020	15
2021	22
2022	20
2023	16